

Testimony Concerning HB 5315
Environment Committee, February 24, 2016
Julie Stankiewicz

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 5315, An Act Concerning the Prevention of the Habituation of Potentially Dangerous Animals, The Posting of Informational Notices Concerning Encounters with Wildlife and the Status of Snapping Turtles Under State Law.

As the bear population continues to increase in Connecticut and as humans encroach further into wildlife habitats, interactions between bears and humans are expected to increase as well. Unfortunately, most Connecticut residents lack the proper knowledge of what to do if they encounter a bear. As an animal lover and wildlife conservationist, I was deeply saddened last year when two bears were euthanized after a hiker in Burlington interacted extensively with them. At least one of these bears had already had several interactions with humans prior to this time.

Education is needed to prevent incidents such as this from recurring. Mandatory signage at state parks and forests that shows people what to do if they encounter bears as well as regulations that prohibit people from feeding bears will help to minimize human-bear interactions. This will make the woods a safer place for hikers and prevent the unnecessary killing of bears as well.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Julie Stankiewicz
Manchester, CT